Claims

[c1]   A method in a computer for displaying advertisements while a user plays a computer game, the method comprising:

receiving a collection of advertisements from a server computer via a communications link;

storing the received collection of advertisements;

starting execution of the computer game to be played by the user, the computer game to be executed by the computer;

while the user is playing the computer game,

selecting an advertisement from the stored collection of advertisements; and

displaying the selected advertisement so that the user can view the selected advertisement while playing the computer game.

[c2]   The method of claim 1 including tracking when the displayed advertisement is selected by the user.

[c3]   The method of claim 2 including sending to a server computer an indication that the advertisement was selected by the user.

[c4]   The method of claim 1 including selecting another advertisement from the stored collection and displaying the selected other advertisement while the user is playing the computer game.

[c5]   The method of claim 1 including rewarding the user based on time spent playing the game.

[c6]   The method of claim 1 including rewarding the user based on speed at which the user completes the game.

[c7]   The method of claim 1 including rewarding the user based on performance of the user at playing the game relative to performance of other users at playing the game.

[c8]   A method in a computer for outputting advertisements while a user interacts with a computer program executing at the computer, the method comprising:

provin a collection of advertisements at the computer;

providing a collection of advertisements at the computer;

starting execution of the computer program on the computer; and

during execution of the computer program on the computer,

selecting an advertisement from the provided collection of advertisements; and

outputting the selected advertisement so that the user perceives the selected advertisement while interacting with the computer program.

[c9]   The method of claim 8 including providing additional advertisements to the computer.

[c10]   The method of claim 8 including:

during execution of the computer program on the computer,

selecting another advertisement from the provided collection of advertisements; and

outputting the selected other advertisement.

[c11]   The method of claim 10 including storing indications of the output advertisements.

[c12]   The method of claim 11 including sending to a server computer the stored indications.

[c13]   The method of claim 8 including:

receiving from the user a selection of an output advertisement; and

storing an indication that the user selected the output advertisement.

[c14]   The method of claim 13 including sending to a server computer the stored indication.

[c15]

The method of claim 8 wherein the selection of the advertisement is based

on a characteristic of the user.

[c16]   The method of claim 8 wherein the provided collection is based on a characteristic of the user.

[c17]   The method of claim 8 wherein the computer program is a game and including collecting statistics relating to the game.

[c18]   The method of claim 17 including sending the collected statistics to a server computer.

[c19]   The method of claim 8 wherein the computer program does not interact with another computer during its execution.

[c20]   The method of claim 8 wherein the execution of the computer program and the selecting of the advertisement are independent of a server computer.

[c21]   The method of claim 8 wherein the collection of advertisements is provided by a server computer.

[c22]   The method of claim 8 wherein the selecting and outputting are under control of the executing computer program.

[c23]   The method of claim 8 wherein the selecting and outputting are under control of another executing computer program.

[c24]   The method of claim 8 wherein the outputting includes displaying the selected advertisement.

[c25]   A method in a server computer for collecting information, the method comprising receiving indications relating to advertisements output while a user interacts with a computer program executing at a client computer, the indications being stored at the client computer while the client computer is offline from a network for connecting the client computer to the server computer.

[c26]
         The method of claim 25 wherein the indications indicate that the user

selected an advertisement.

[c27]   The method of claim 25 wherein the advertisements that are output are selected based on a characteristic of the user.

[c28]   The method of claim 25 wherein the advertisements are provided to the client computer by another computer.

[c29]   The method of claim 28 wherein the other computer is the server computer.

[c30]   The method of claim 25 wherein the computer program is a game and including receiving indications relating to playing the game.

[c31]   The method of claim 25 wherein the computer program does not interact with another computer during its execution.

[c32]   The method of claim 25 wherein the client computer selects an advertisement independent of the server computer.

[c33]   A computer-readable medium containing a data structure that includes indications relating to advertisements output while a user interacts with a computer program executing at a client computer, the indications being stored at the client computer while the client computer is not connected to the server computer.

[c34]   The computer-readable medium of claim 33 wherein the indications indicate that the user selected an advertisement.

[c35]   The computer-readable medium of claim 33 wherein the advertisements that are output are selected based on a characteristic of the user.

[c36]   The computer-readable medium of claim 33 wherein the advertisements are provided to the client computer by another computer.

[c37]   The computer-readable medium of claim 36 wherein the other computer is the server computer that receives the data structure.

[c38]   The computer-readable medium of claim 37 wherein the computer program

is a game and the data structure includes indications relating to playing the game.

[c39] The computer-readable medium of claim 33 wherein the computer program does not interact with another computer during its execution.

[c40] The computer-readable medium of claim 33 wherein the client computer selects an advertisement independent of a server computer.

[c41] A computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a computer to output advertisements while a user interacts with a computer program executing at the computer, by a method comprising:

> providing a collection of advertisements at the computer;
> starting execution of the computer program on the computer;
> selecting an advertisement from the provided collection of advertisements; and
> outputting the selected advertisement so that the user can perceive the selected advertisement while interacting with the computer program.

[c42] The computer-readable medium of claim 41 including providing additional advertisements to the computer.

[c43] The computer-readable medium of claim 41 including:

> selecting another advertisement from the provided collection of advertisements; and
> outputting the selected other advertisement.

[c44] The computer-readable medium of claim 43 including storing indications of the output advertisements.

[c45] The computer-readable medium of claim 44 including sending to a server computer the stored indications.

[c46] The computer-readable medium of claim 41 including:

> receiving from a user selection of an output advertisement; and

storing an indication that the user selected the output advertisement.

[c47]   The computer-readable medium of claim 46 including sending to a server computer the stored indication.

[c48]   The computer-readable medium of claim 41 wherein the selection of the advertisement is based on a characteristic of the user.

[c49]   The computer-readable medium of claim 41 wherein the provided collection is based on a characteristic of the user.

[c50]   The computer-readable medium of claim 41 wherein the computer program is a game and including collecting statistics relating to the game.

[c51]   The computer-readable medium of claim 50 including sending the collected statistics to a server computer.

[c52]   The computer-readable medium of claim 41 wherein the computer program does not interact with another computer during its execution.

[c53]   The computer-readable medium of claim 41 wherein the execution of the computer program and the selecting of the advertisement are independent of a server computer.

[c54]   The computer-readable medium of claim 41 wherein the collection of advertisements is provided by a server computer.

[c55]   The computer-readable medium of claim 41 wherein the selecting and outputting are under control of the executing computer program.

[c56]   The computer-readable medium of claim 41 wherein the selecting and outputting are under control of another executing computer program.

[c57]   The computer-readable medium of claim 41 wherein the outputting includes displaying the selected advertisement.

[c58]   The computer-readable medium of claim 41 wherein the selecting and outputting are performed during execution of the computer program.

[c59]   A system for outputting advertisements at a computer while a user interacts
with a computer program executing at the computer, comprising:

   means for storing a collection of advertisements at the computer;

   means for executing the computer program;

   means for selecting an advertisement from the collection of
   advertisements; and

   means outputting the selected advertisement so that the user can
   perceive the selected advertisement while interacting with the
   computer program.

[c60]   The system of claim 59 including means for providing additional
advertisements to the computer.

[c61]   The system of claim 59 including:

   means for selecting another advertisement from the provided
   collection of advertisements; and

   means for outputting the selected other advertisement.

[c62]   The system of claim 59 means for sending indications of selected
advertisements to a server computer.